United Nations S/2005/273

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 April 2005

Original: English

Twenty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1562 (2004) of 17 September 2004, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) until 30 June 2005. In my twenty-fourth report on UNAMSIL, dated 10 December 2004 (S/2004/965), I indicated my intention to submit to the Security Council in April 2005 a report on the implementation of the benchmarks it had established by its resolution 1537 (2004) for the residual UNAMSIL presence, together with a further assessment of the security situation in the country and possible recommendations in this regard. An interdepartmental assessment mission led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations visited Sierra Leone from 20 to 28 March to evaluate the benchmarks and collect the information needed to develop those recommendations. The findings of the assessment mission and my recommendations concerning the future of UNAMSIL and the continued United Nations presence in Sierra Leone following the withdrawal of UNAMSIL are provided in sections II, IX, X and XI of the present report. The report also provides an update on major developments in the peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone since my last report.

II. Assessment mission

2. The assessment mission comprised representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNAMSIL. The team evaluated progress made in the benchmarks set by the Security Council, which include (a) strengthening the capacity of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces and Sierra Leone police to maintain security and stability effectively throughout the country; (b) consolidating State authority throughout Sierra Leone; and (c) consolidating the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) throughout that country.

3. The mission also evaluated the security situation in Sierra Leone, as well as other important aspects of the overall peace consolidation and national recovery process. The team met with a wide cross-section of Sierra Leonean and international stakeholders in the peace process. It also visited several parts of the country. The

05-31962 (E) 040505

President, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, and the Vice-President, Solomon Berewa, received the mission in separate meetings and provided their assessments of the overall situation in the country and in the subregion, as well as the views of the Government on the withdrawal of UNAMSIL and a possible post-UNAMSIL United Nations presence. The findings of the mission are described in subsections A and B below.

A. Status of the residual UNAMSIL presence

4. By the end of February, UNAMSIL had completed the transition to its residual presence in Sierra Leone, comprising 3,250 troops, 141 military observers and 80 civilian police personnel. (For the current troop strength, see the annex to the present report.) In order to carry out the mandated tasks outlined in Security Council resolution 1562 (2004), the force, which now comprises three infantry battalions and support units, is deployed as follows: a Nigerian battalion in Freetown, a Pakistani battalion in Kenema, and a Ghanaian battalion in Bo. Support units are located in Freetown.

B. Progress on benchmarks

5. The Government of Sierra Leone, with the support of UNAMSIL and other bilateral and multilateral partners, has made considerable progress in the implementation of the benchmarks. The situation in the country since my last report has been calm and stable. There have been no security incidents requiring UNAMSIL support for the Sierra Leone security forces since the Mission handed over primary responsibility for security in the country to the Government in September 2004. UNAMSIL has played a supporting role since it began to focus on assisting the security forces in conducting border security patrols, transportation and construction projects to improve barracks and other infrastructure, and running training courses for armed forces personnel, including courses in driving, logistics, vehicle maintenance, information technology and signals.

6. In several areas some major shortfalls remain, however, particularly with regard to the security sector. Much also remains to be done to further consolidate State administration throughout the country and fully restore Government control over diamond-mining activities, as described in paragraphs 7 to 25 below.

1. Strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leone security sector

7. During their discussions with the assessment team, President Kabbah, Vice-President Berewa and concerned Government Ministers and heads of security agencies stated that the Government was determined to continue enhancing the capacity of the security sector to effectively maintain the external and internal security of the country.

8. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, supported by the International Military Advisory and Training Team, led by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, have continued to build their operational capabilities. The Government, with the support of the Team, has continued a contingency programme aimed at increasing the capacity of the armed forces to deal effectively with threats to external security and to backstop the Sierra Leone police in maintaining law and order. That programme, launched in July 2003, includes the deployment of three

armed forces brigades to the provinces and border areas; and the continuation of the restructuring of the armed forces to reduce their troop strength from the present level of some 13,000 military personnel towards the planned goal of 10,500 by 2007. The establishment nationwide of security and intelligence committees, known as provincial and district security committees, which provide a framework for cooperation among the Sierra Leone police, armed forces and local authorities on security matters at the district and provincial levels, and the construction of barracks for troops in the provinces and border areas, under a programme called Operation Pebu, also constitute integral parts of the programme. The International Military Advisory and Training Team is expected to continue its operations in Sierra Leone at least until 2010.

9. President Kabbah and Vice-President Berewa, as well as senior officials of the Ministry of Defence, the armed forces, the International Military Advisory and Training Team and UNAMSIL informed the mission, however, that the programme to prepare the armed forces to effectively assume responsibility for the external security of the country was behind schedule. Furthermore, the operational effectiveness of the armed forces is particularly hampered by logistical shortfalls, including a serious lack of communications equipment and accommodation. Operation Pebu has slowed down and its concept has been changed so that priority has been accorded to the construction of barracks at two sites, Pujehun and Kailahun. It is anticipated that each of those sites will accommodate 600 personnel and will be completed by June 2006. Subsequently, construction on five additional sites would continue, to be completed by 2010. The assessment mission was informed of the forthcoming provision of communications equipment by the United Kingdom Government later this year, which would help to alleviate the shortfall.

10. I have been pleased to note that, following my letter of 25 August 2004 to potential donors, appealing for assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone regarding the provision of urgently needed equipment for the armed forces, a number of donations were made, and some pledges yet to be fulfilled. These include a donation by the Government of Switzerland of 260 assorted trucks. The Government of the Netherlands has announced its intention to provide €2 million for the purchase of vehicles. These generous gestures will certainly help to improve the armed forces transport fleet, which is currently largely inoperable. The construction of accommodation — some 400 single-room units with communal facilities — is expected to start soon at an armed forces training camp near Freetown, with assistance from the Government of India. Furthermore, the assessment team was informed of the proposed donation of three marine coastal patrol vessels by the United States and one by China. Serious shortfalls remain, however, which prompted me to send a further letter on 24 March 2005 appealing to potential donors to once more consider providing assistance for the Sierra Leone armed forces, specifically with regard to communications equipment and accommodation.

11. The Sierra Leone armed forces and police have continued to conduct joint patrols, which are now carried out without the operational support of UNAMSIL. A national security exercise on command and control at strategic and operational levels was successfully held in November 2004, involving President Kabbah and the National Security Council, as well as the senior echelons of the armed forces and police. A further exercise is planned for early May to focus on detailed operational

command, including the establishment of a joint police and armed forces operations centre.

12. Supported by UNDP, the UNAMSIL civilian police component and the training team of the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project, the Sierra Leone police have made notable improvements in performance in maintaining internal security. The current strength of the police force stands at some 8,200; it is expected to reach some 8,600 personnel by May.

13. The construction of classrooms and dormitories at the Police Training School in Hastings, near Freetown, funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and UNDP, has been completed, allowing for an increase from 400 to 600 recruits per trainee group. However, the Government has not provided the requisite funding for training of the increased number of recruits. Given this shortfall, the benchmark of 9,500 trained police officers in the Sierra Leone police by the end of 2005 is not expected to be met. In addition, lack of accommodation in the provinces is seriously hampering further deployments of the police throughout the country.

14. UNAMSIL continues to ensure coordinated efforts towards strengthening and building the capacity of the Sierra Leone police through in-service specialist training and the development of training manuals. The in-service training programme was boosted by the construction and renovation of regional training centres in Bo, Kenema and Makeni, funded by UNDP. Since September 2003, 729 police officers have benefited from a programme for middle-management police staff. Furthermore, 109 field-coaching officers, who would take over mentoring activities following the withdrawal of UNAMSIL, and some 150 training instructors have been trained. Officers are also being trained for the Sierra Leone police Precious Minerals Unit. In-service training is provided for officers in several key policing areas.

15. Despite the logistical shortfalls referred to above, the ability of the Sierra Leone police to plan and conduct security operations is gradually improving. The police were able to contain the demonstrations staged by university students in Freetown from 25 February to 2 March, which led to some violent incidents in the city, as well as an earlier strike action led by the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, in both cases without backup assistance at the scene of incidents from UNAMSIL or support from the armed forces, although UNAMSIL did provide fuel to support the police operations. However, these incidents highlighted some serious shortcomings in the command and control structure of the police and in their liaison with the Office of National Security. These shortcomings are now being addressed by the Government.

16. The Office of National Security has continued to improve its effectiveness and intelligence-gathering capacity. Together with the National Security Council and its Coordinating Group, the Office of National Security meets regularly to address security issues. However, the effectiveness of the central security structures is hampered by resource limitations. The deployment of regional security coordinators has strengthened the management of the district and provincial security committees. Their ability to function effectively is however hampered by a lack of communications and transportation between the districts, provincial capitals and Freetown. In addition, some international interlocutors indicated to the assessment

mission that the enhancement of the capacity of the security sector was being hampered by lack of strategic financial management by the Government.

17. Strengthening the capacity of the Sierra Leonean security sector also needs to be assessed in the context of the fragile security situation in the wider Mano River basin subregion, comprising Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. There exists a risk of spillover effects should tensions increase in Liberia in connection with the elections to be held in October. Furthermore, setbacks in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire or possible instability in Guinea, and the unresolved territorial issue between Guinea and Sierra Leone over the border village of Yenga in the eastern part of the country could pose potential security threats to Sierra Leone. It is generally recognized, nonetheless, that there are currently no major external threats to the security of Sierra Leone.

18. In meetings with the assessment mission, President Kabbah, Vice-President Berewa and concerned senior security officials stated that withdrawal of UNAMSIL at the end of June when its current mandate expires would be premature. In their view, it could be expected that by the end of 2005, the security sector would have effectively assumed primary responsibility for the security of the country, subject to the timely provision of much-needed assistance. Neither the President nor the Vice-President called for the continuation of UNAMSIL into 2006.

2. Consolidating State authority

19. The Government of Sierra Leone has continued to consolidate its authority throughout the country. The decentralization process, which provides a framework for the devolution of power and responsibilities between the central and local governments, has made further strides. With the support of the World Bank, United Nations agencies and UNAMSIL, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development has been conducting training and capacity-building programmes for members of the local councils that were elected in May 2004. The councils are now functioning, but their capacity to deliver services to the population is seriously hampered by lack of qualified personnel, funding, logistics and infrastructure.

20. The judiciary is being gradually consolidated, albeit at a slow pace. The administration of justice in the customary courts at the chiefdom level has recently been boosted by the appointment of over 200 chairpersons of customary court nationwide. There is at least one magistrates' court in operation in each of the 12 administrative districts, although there are currently only five resident magistrates. As a temporary solution, Justices of the Peace have been appointed and deployed in each district. UNDP is working with the Government on a programme to improve remuneration levels for magistrates in order to increase recruitment. Government officials from the main ministries are operating in all 12 administrative districts and the increased presence of the police force in the provinces has considerably improved the Government's capacity to maintain law and order.

21. The weakness of the judiciary and in the administration of justice is an issue of great concern. While court houses and prison facilities have been built or renovated throughout the country, progress has been slow in addressing such problems as undue delays in the trial and adjudication of cases and the lack of judicial personnel. These problems are further exacerbated by the lack of codified opinions of the Supreme Court and statutory laws of the country. Although DFID has earmarked

some £25 million for a programme of reform of the justice sector, there has been slow progress in embarking upon a comprehensive approach to addressing the problems, including legal aid and traditional and alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution.

22. The Government has made considerable progress in increasing its control over the diamond-mining sector. A total of 2,300 diamond-mining licences were issued in 2004 compared to 800 in 2001. Furthermore, official exports of diamonds increased from $10 million in 2000 to $127 million in 2004, in large part because of the various measures taken by the Government to curb illicit mining, including implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. A Kimberley Process review mission which visited Sierra Leone from 20 to 27 February observed significant progress in the implementation of the Scheme in Sierra Leone. The mission nevertheless expressed concern about the challenges that remain with regard to monitoring and enforcement capacity as well as regulation of the diamond sector.

23. The Government is taking further measures to implement the core minerals policy adopted in December 2004, which seeks to create an enabling legal, fiscal and institutional framework for the development of the country's mineral wealth and prevent the use of natural resources to finance conflict and other illegal activities. Further measures have been taken to implement the 1994 Minerals Act, including the imposition of stricter penalties for the illegal possession and smuggling of diamonds.

24. With the support of DFID, the World Bank, UNDP and UNAMSIL, a national cadastral system is being established, which would facilitate the settlement of disputes over mining rights and boundaries of territorial administrative units, as well as mining sites, and would contribute to creating an environment conducive to private investment in the diamond-mining sector. In addition, the High-level Steering Committee on Diamonds has continued to coordinate efforts aimed at improving the governance and development of the diamond sector. The Diamond Area Community Development Fund, which provides a proportion of funds from the 3 per cent export tax on diamonds to chiefdoms in which mining is carried out, is also supporting development in those areas.

25. Despite progress made, the diamond sector continues to face many serious challenges. According to surveys of mining sites conducted by UNAMSIL, more than 50 per cent of diamond mining still remains unlicensed and reportedly considerable illegal diamond smuggling continues. While the Government has deployed monitors in the major diamond-mining areas nationwide, their efficiency remains limited, owing to lack of transport and other logistical constraints, and corruption is reportedly also a problem. Further progress by the Government is needed, although it should be noted that ensuring effective control over diamond mining is a long-term process requiring the close involvement of local communities and sustained international support.

3. Consolidating the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

26. As at the end of April, UNMIL troop strength stood at 14,851 military personnel, including 192 military observers. The troops are deployed across Liberia, with sector headquarters at Monrovia, Gbarnga, Tubmanburg and Zwedru. UNMIL troops continue to provide security at border crossing points and to conduct air,

mobile and foot border patrols. They are also engaged in cordon-and-search operations and the collection and destruction of weapons. In addition, some 1,100 United Nations civilian police officers are currently deployed in various sites in the country, including four formed police units located in Monrovia, Buchanan and Gbarnga.

27. Security on the Liberian side of the border with Sierra Leone is provided by the Pakistani contingent based in Tubmanburg. A Pakistani infantry battalion is deployed in Lofa County, while a Namibian infantry battalion is deployed in Grand Cape Mount County. UNMIL and UNAMSIL units hold regular liaison meetings attended by representatives of the Sierra Leonean and Liberian authorities at the two main border crossing points at Gendema Bridge in the south and Buedu in the north and carry out other liaison activities. In addition, UNAMSIL and UNMIL coordinate routine aviation patrols. The Sierra Leonean authorities reported to the assessment mission that the deployment of UNMIL in the areas bordering Sierra Leone had resulted in a substantial reduction in illegal cross-border activities and improved border security. Sierra Leonean security sector representatives reported that this was allowing for a reduction in Sierra Leone armed forces deployment sites in areas in the Eastern Province, bordering Liberia.

III. Regional aspects

28. A Mano River Union summit was held at the Sierra Leone border town of Koindu on 20 February, at which leaders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone pledged to work closely together to promote regional peace and security and improve commercial and economic cooperation.

29. In a welcome development, on 24 March, the Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia signed a memorandum of understanding concerning the mutual repatriation of ex-combatants. In April, 387 Liberian ex-combatants were repatriated to Liberia, thus completing the exercise.

30. Meanwhile, the importance of the Governments of Sierra Leone and Guinea urgently taking concrete steps to resolve the territorial issue of the Yenga border village was repeatedly stressed to the assessment mission. In an incident in the area on 26 March, a group of UNAMSIL military observers were detained for six hours by Guinean armed forces near Yenga before being released. On 2 September 2004, at a meeting in Conakry, the Presidents of the two countries issued a statement which reaffirmed that the village of Yenga belonged to Sierra Leone. However, concrete steps have yet to be taken to ensure that the agreement is abided by, including the withdrawal of Guinean troops from Sierra Leonean territory and the subsequent demarcation of the boundary. In addition, several of the assessment mission's interlocutors alleged that Guinean armed elements were engaged in agriculture in the area.

Inter-mission cooperation

31. UNAMSIL, UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) have continued to enhance inter-mission cooperation. On 11 March, the heads of the three peacekeeping missions and the United Nations Office for West Africa met in Freetown to consider the situation on the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border,

joint operations between UNMIL and UNOCI, and the outcome of the Force Commanders' meeting held in Dakar on 23 February.

32. Furthermore, representatives of the United Nations country teams of the Mano River Union countries and Côte d'Ivoire held their first consultative meeting in Freetown on 15 and 16 February, with the aim of developing a coordinated approach towards addressing the key common challenges faced in the subregion. A programme of cooperation between the respective country teams to address the traffic in small arms, human trafficking and other issues was agreed upon.

IV. Humanitarian situation

33. The operation to support the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees launched in 2001 was concluded in December 2004. In a remarkable development, 271,991 Sierra Leonean refugees returned, of whom 190,515 came from Guinea, 79,915 from Liberia and 1,561 from other countries in the region. Of these, 179,497 Sierra Leonean refugees returned with the assistance of UNHCR while 92,494 returned spontaneously. An estimated 13,500 persons remained in countries of asylum following the conclusion of the operation, of whom 1,825 are in Guinea and 2,368 in Liberia. Some 500 unaccompanied children separated from their families remain in Guinea. In 2005, UNICEF, ICRC and UNHCR and the two concerned Governments will continue to trace families and provide foster care arrangements to enable these children to be repatriated. I congratulate all humanitarian organizations involved in this major achievement in assisting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

34. UNHCR will conclude its programme of reintegration activities in Sierra Leone in December 2005. From 2001 to 2004, 1,485 small reintegration support projects or community empowerment projects were completed at Kailahun, Kono, Kambia and Pujehun under a joint programme of UNHCR, UNDP and the World Bank. There are currently approximately 50,000 Liberian refugees living in eight camps in the eastern part of Sierra Leone. In 2005, the focus of UNHCR efforts will be on facilitating the repatriation of some 14,000 Liberian refugees who are expected to return.

35. Since mid-December 2004, the World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed some 871 tons of food commodities to 288,993 beneficiaries. Although Sierra Leone has rich agricultural resources, 10 years of civil war have severely reduced the country's food security. Production of paddy rice, the main staple crop, has increased by 20 per cent over the past two years but has reached only 50 per cent of the pre-war level. High prices for food items, high unemployment and generally low incomes have reduced access to food, particularly for the most vulnerable sectors of society, including women and children. Growth in agriculture and trade continues to be impeded by poor road networks. Coordinated and sustained humanitarian interventions such as the WFP food for work and food for agriculture programmes will continue to be required to support the rehabilitation of roads, bridges and other infrastructure vital to enhance food security. The UNDP transitional support teams are working with the Government to identify needs and priorities and ensure that relief activities are in line with the longer-term programmes of development actors.

36. In the education sector, enrolment levels increased from 659,503 in the 2001/02 academic year to 1,092,721 in 2003/04. Over 50 per cent of the primary

schools are now functioning, although often under very poor conditions. The rehabilitation of schools is therefore a key priority. UNICEF assists by providing temporary shelters and educational materials and supporting in-service teacher training. Moreover, the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools programme, which enables over-age children to complete a shortened primary school programme, is in operation in several districts. UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education and non-governmental organizations to develop community schools for the estimated 375,000 children who do not currently attend school, in addition to supporting other primary education initiatives.

37. Important needs have yet to be addressed in the health sector. The UNICEF health programme continues to support Government efforts by contributing to the revitalization of primary health care units and promoting the capacity-building of district health service institutions. Routine and supplementary immunization activities are also being implemented. The Mission continues to play a role in building local capacity to diagnose Lassa fever in Sierra Leone. In particular, UNAMSIL is working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop a diagnostic capacity in the subregion through the establishment of a medical laboratory attached to the Kenema general hospital, and its vital Lassa fever ward. The establishment of the laboratory would be a part of the larger WHO Mano River Union Lassa fever network, which is expected to eventually include laboratories in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. UNAMSIL hopes to make a significant contribution to the completion of the laboratory in Kenema later this year.

V. Economic recovery

38. The gross domestic product of Sierra Leone increased by 7.2 per cent in 2004 compared to 6.5 per cent in 2003. This continued economic growth was spurred by donor-funded imports, nationwide reconstruction and rehabilitation projects, broad recovery in the agricultural sector, and increased investment in the country. During 2004, however, inflation rose considerably because of high oil and rice prices, delays in aid disbursements, and inadequate fiscal adjustments.

39. Government finances and revenue collection improved significantly during the first half of 2004. However, the Government continues to rely on a high level of external financial support, and 50 per cent of the national budget is donor-funded. On 31 March, President Kabbah officially launched the refurbishment programme of the Sierra Rutile Limited Company in Moyamba district. The company is expected to commence full operations late in 2005, which should boost foreign exchange earnings and provide employment to some 900 workers. In order to attract investments and encourage private sector development, continued improvements need to be made to investment-supportive infrastructure, such as power and energy, roads and transportation, as well as information and communication technology. Sustained economic growth is likely to become increasingly challenging, as donor aid for post-conflict needs is being gradually phased out. Inward investment is sorely needed, and post-conflict emergency aid needs to be followed up by longer-term donor assistance and development. In addition, to ensure price stability, it will be necessary to further reduce the need for domestic financing of Government deficits through reduced recurrent spending and sound fiscal and monetary policies.

40. The sustained economic growth experienced during the immediate post-conflict recovery period must be appraised against the backdrop of the depth and severity of poverty in Sierra Leone. An integrated household survey conducted by the Office of Sierra Leone Statistics in 2003 and 2004 indicated that 70 per cent of the population in Sierra Leone continues to live on less than a dollar a day.

VI. Human rights

41. Progress has continued towards the building of national capacity in human rights protection, monitoring and reporting. Human rights committees, comprising local human rights and pro-democracy organizations as well as concerned individuals, have been established in 9 out of 12 districts. UNAMSIL has continued to train several local human rights and pro-democracy organizations, as well as the staff of some international non-governmental organizations, who in turn are training human rights monitors and activists throughout the country.

42. Many of the key human rights issues that led to or resulted from the Sierra Leone conflict still persist. While there are no longer egregious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, a culture of respect for human rights and democratic values has not fully taken root. While training on human rights and other aspects of democracy and the rule of law for the law enforcement agencies has ensured a reduction in abuses and impunity, there are still instances of disregard for basic human rights especially in the provinces. To this end, UNAMSIL will continue all ongoing programmes aimed at the training of law enforcement officials.

VII. Transitional justice

43. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has completed its mandate, and submitted its final report to President Kabbah in October 2004. The Cabinet Committee established by the Government to draft a White Paper in response to the report has completed its work with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The White Paper has not been released, however, and the Government has yet to establish a follow-up committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission. OHCHR has provided funds for the dissemination of the report and sensitization of the population on the Commission's findings and recommendations.

44. The trials at the Special Court for Sierra Leone continue. While the indicted former Chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), Johnny Paul Koroma, remains at large, the Special Court has taken steps with respect to the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor. During 2003, the Registrar sent two requests to the Government of Nigeria seeking an agreement between the Special Court and the Government of Nigeria on the modalities for the arrest and transfer of persons wanted by the Special Court. In this regard, it is worth noting that the European Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution on 24 February, calling on the European Union and its member States to take immediate action to bring about the appearance of Charles Taylor before the Special Court.

45. Following the visit of the Management Committee of the Special Court to Freetown from 7 to 11 March, the Registrar held consultations with UNAMSIL and

the Deputy Registrar met with the assessment mission with a view to determining the security arrangements for the Special Court following the departure of UNAMSIL. On the basis of the discussions with Special Court officials, the following options were considered: the provision of (a) a United Nations company-size military unit or a United Nations formed police unit — either a stand-alone unit or a contingent provided by UNMIL; (b) a contingent provided by ECOWAS; and (c) security support by an international private security company.

46. The Special Court indicated to the assessment mission that a United Nations police or gendarmerie unit would be its preferred option, given the nature of the tasks, and that the United Nations police contingent would find natural interlocutors in the Sierra Leone police force, which provides security for the Court. It should be noted that the Special Court has the capacity to independently manage and administer the protection unit, but that it currently does not have the funds necessary to sustain such a unit. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is consulting closely with the Office of Legal Affairs on all aspects of this important issue. I intend to provide recommendations to the Council on this matter in the near future.

VIII. Challenges ahead: ensuring a smooth transition from peacekeeping to capacity-building

47. Despite progress made in consolidating peace in Sierra Leone, the overall situation remains fragile. The relative stability prevailing in the country needs to be further enhanced through concrete steps aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict and nurturing a culture of human rights through monitoring, reporting and building national capacity. Widespread poverty, illiteracy, discrimination against women, corruption, lack of accountability, and high levels of youth unemployment continue to cause serious concern. Good governance needs to be fostered under the rule of law and political dialogue encouraged so as to promote the ongoing democratic process and sustainable peace.

Continuation of political and electoral reform

48. The National Electoral Commission, with significant international support, successfully organized the local government elections in 2004. There has since been only limited progress on electoral reform, however. The issue of the appointment of a suitable replacement for the former Chairperson of the Electoral Commission, who resigned seven months ago has yet to be resolved by the Government. Furthermore, no agreement has been reached on the restructuring of the Commission to ensure its independence, or on the Government's financial commitment to sustain the new structure. Given the importance and complexity of the issues relating to the National Electoral Commission, it is imperative that a partnership urgently be formed between the Commission, the Government and donors to ensure that the electoral reform process is carried out without further delay and the Commission's capacity strengthened for the organization of the national elections in 2007.

49. Another area of concern is the potential for antagonism arising between the newly-elected district councils and the traditional and chieftaincy authorities, particularly over the control and sharing of financial resources, which can negatively affect progress towards effective decentralization. The district councils, which are vital to decentralized and participatory governance, should be adequately

supported, to help to ensure the effective delivery of services to the population. Furthermore, a clear distribution of responsibilities should be established between the district councils and the chieftaincy system. The issue of boundary disputes between several chieftaincies is also a potential source of tension that needs to be addressed. Currently, the effective functioning of the Parliament presents a major challenge, particularly in the performance of its legislative and oversight responsibilities.

Good governance

50. Many of the assessment mission's interlocutors indicated that growing public discontent over corruption in the management of State revenues was a serious problem which needed to be urgently addressed by the Government. The Anti-Corruption Commission, which was established five years ago by President Kabbah, has recently been strengthened with the addition of international and national staff. The mission was informed that two Commonwealth judges and special prosecutors are expected to be appointed in the near future to deal with serious corruption cases. A national corruption strategy was adopted in February and six Cabinet Ministers are currently being investigated for corruption. The Government needs to give full support to the Anti-Corruption Commission and take concrete steps to effectively combat corruption, since the widespread malcontent over this issue poses a potential threat to stability.

Youth and other social issues

51. Lasting peace cannot be achieved without addressing the significant political, economic and social marginalization and the youth in Sierra Leone. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has been working with UNAMSIL and the United Nations country team to address youth-related issues, particularly the problem of unemployment, and to implement the National Youth Policy designed towards that end. Sustained support should also be provided for employment-generation initiatives that target youth, including vulnerable groups such as girls, amputees and demobilized child soldiers. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring the rights, protection and well-being of children.

52. Women have played a critical role in ensuring a return to democratic governance in Sierra Leone. Continued support is vital for efforts to empower women, and for promoting their role as peacemakers, peacebuilders, and leaders in the governance and future development of Sierra Leone.

Justice sector reform

53. Justice sector reform has been delayed by a lack of funds, qualified personnel and infrastructure, which further exacerbates the problems of access to and the timely delivery of justice. The judiciary, both national courts as well as magistrates', local and chiefdom courts, will continue to be severely strained in the near future, but would benefit in the near term from both additional logistical assistance and support for community-based, including traditional, means of dispute resolution. The lack of access to justice is particularly egregious in the provincial areas, where poor working and living conditions discourage qualified judges from serving.

Security sector aspects

54. The security structure of Sierra Leone, including the Office of National Security and the provincial and district security committees, should be assisted further in building its capacity. In particular, support should be provided for establishing early warning systems for potential security problems. Furthermore, the capacities of civic actors, traditional leaders, and the elected district councils should be enhanced to facilitate the peaceful resolution of localized conflicts and disputes. The issue of most serious concern is the logistical shortfalls of the Sierra Leone police and the armed forces, particularly with regard to communications equipment and accommodation, which hamper further deployment of the police throughout the country and undermine the operational capability of the armed forces.

Public information strategy

55. UNAMSIL has continued to play a significant role in keeping the media and public informed about the activities of the Mission and the United Nations country team, government reforms and local council programmes. A major concern after the withdrawal of UNAMSIL would be a widening information gap, as currently there is no clear-cut Government public information policy. The Government should embark on a proactive programme to formulate a media policy after consultations with key stakeholders. The Government should also be encouraged to establish a network radio with nationwide coverage to take over after UNAMSIL withdraws. Steps should be taken to sustain the significant accomplishments of UNAMSIL Radio and of local initiatives like Talking Drums Radio.

Economic sustainment

56. Sierra Leone could benefit from sustained support for community-based economic initiatives, including in the context of ongoing recovery programmes. This should focus in particular on the provision of credit and other inputs for small businesses and cooperative enterprises, and on structural support for informal markets, so as to allow both income generation and economic empowerment. The implementation of the poverty reduction strategy paper recently finalized by the Government will be of particular importance. The paper will be presented, among other strategy and project documents, to the Consultative Group at its meeting in Paris on 6 and 7 June, which major Sierra Leone development partners and donors are expected to attend. In addition, a private-sector forum to boost investment may be held simultaneously with the meeting of the Consultative Group.

IX. Options for the period beyond June 2005

57. As indicated in my report to the Security Council of 5 September 2002 (S/2002/987), the ultimate goal of the UNAMSIL drawdown is to ensure a gradual, phased and deliberate transfer of responsibility for the security of Sierra Leone from the United Nations to the Government of Sierra Leone. The Government formally assumed primary responsibility for security throughout the country in September 2004, and since then has continued consolidating its capacity in this area.

58. The general view of the majority of Sierra Leonean and international stakeholders with whom the assessment team met was that, in the absence of external security threats, the greatest danger to peace and security in the country

may emanate from civil unrest resulting from lack of improvement in the economy and the general living standards of the majority of the population. Furthermore, it is expected that the security sector will effectively assume responsibility for the security of the country by December 2005, subject to the provision of needed assistance.

59. Against this background, the majority of national and international stakeholders emphasized the need for the continued deployment of the residual UNAMSIL presence until the end of 2005, after which its mandate should be terminated. This would provide time for the further strengthening of the Sierra Leonean security sector, while allowing for a smooth transition from peacekeeping to capacity-building in the post-UNAMSIL period. To this end, UNAMSIL and the United Nations country team are already implementing a jointly prepared transition plan, which provides a framework for the continued involvement of the international community in Sierra Leone following the withdrawal of UNAMSIL from the country, while it also emphasizes national ownership of the development process.

60. This option would also allow a number of residual tasks to be addressed, including the continuing provision of security to the Special Court during 2005 and putting in place arrangements to ensure continued security support to the Court after the Mission's departure from the country, support for the recruitment and training of the Sierra Leone police and armed forces and strengthening national capacity for the protection of human rights.

61. The continuation of UNAMSIL until the end of 2005 would also be important to reassure the population that the United Nations is not leaving Sierra Leone altogether, but will be adjusting its strategy in the light of new challenges. Furthermore, until the end of the UNAMSIL mandate, the major tasks identified under the transition plan, including those relating to support for the consolidation of State authority, restoration of Government control over diamond mining, monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation and others would be carried out jointly by UNAMSIL and the United Nations country team.

62. Clearly, there is a calculated risk involved in withdrawing the force before 31 December. However, such a risk could be mitigated by the commitment of the United Kingdom to maintaining the presence of the United Kingdom-led International Military Advisory and Training Team, which will continue its training of the Sierra Leone armed forces at least until 2010, and the possibility of using UNMIL in case of emergencies. I would therefore propose that a study be carried out into the logistical, political and legal implications of the cross-border commitment of UNMIL following the withdrawal of UNAMSIL, including the possibility of the provision of security to the Special Court, as referred to in paragraphs 45 and 46 above. The study would then be presented to the Security Council by July.

X. Considerations on a post-UNAMSIL United Nations presence

63. While stability has been successfully restored in Sierra Leone, serious challenges continue to be faced in building durable peace. Whereas the institutions of the State can now provide for basic security, considerable capacity-building is

needed to enhance the Government's capability to carry out its functions. Hence, after the termination of UNAMSIL, a strong United Nations system presence is likely to be needed in Sierra Leone to continue to build peace by enhancing political and economic governance and also the national capacity for conflict prevention.

64. Discussions are still taking place among United Nations partners, in particular the Department of Political Affairs and UNDP, on the mandate, structure and financing of this presence. A number of options are being considered, with a particular focus on ensuring that the United Nations system is able to develop and implement in a fully coordinated and integrated manner, and in close consultation with national stakeholders, a viable peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone. The follow-on presence should take into account the recommendations contained in my report of 21 March entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" with regard to sustained support for post-conflict peacebuilding. Clearly, Sierra Leone presents a unique and complex set of challenges, as well as opportunities to pilot a new approach to sustaining peace. I have requested that the consultations on this matter be concluded expeditiously in May, after which I would intend to revert to the Council with final recommendations.

XI. Drawdown of the residual UNAMSIL presence

65. A minimum of four months will be needed to withdraw the residual force from its bases in Kenema, Bo and Freetown, close the 10 United Nations military observer sites and repatriate personnel and equipment by sea and by air. Thus, all military units, including military observers, would depart from the mission area commencing around mid-August, and the departures would essentially be completed by 31 December. UNAMSIL, in consultation with United Nations Headquarters, will work out a plan for the further drawdown of the force. To achieve a smooth departure process while ensuring that limited operational capability is maintained, battalions will be declared non-operational sequentially and will subsequently be repatriated. The Nigerian battalion in Freetown will be the last battalion to depart. New security arrangements for the Special Court will need to be in place by early November 2005 to allow time for a smooth handover of responsibility and the departure of the Nigerian company which is currently providing security support at the Court.

XII. Mission support issues

66. It is planned that the Mission will have a six-month liquidation period. UNAMSIL is therefore preparing a draft liquidation plan and preliminary disposal plan which should be completed by 30 June. The Mission has also identified assets that would be useful for enhancing the capacity of the Government of Sierra Leone. The inventory value of the assets of the Mission as at 30 June 2004 amounted to some $71.9 million, 12 per cent of which are proposed for donation to the Government of Sierra Leone. It is planned that the remaining assets will be transferred to a follow-on United Nations presence in Sierra Leone or to other United Nations peacekeeping missions and offices, and be written off or disposed of commercially.

67. As UNAMSIL has been drawing down, international staff turnover has increased, owing to reassignments to new and expanding missions, which has resulted in a reduction of skilled staff in the Mission. UNAMSIL, in cooperation with United Nations Headquarters, is exploring various mechanisms to ensure retention or replacement of experienced staff in order to complete the mandate implementation tasks and ensure an orderly liquidation of the Mission by June 2006. At the same time, UNAMSIL and United Nations Headquarters are working closely together to provide for the timely and orderly redeployment of experienced staff to other missions, as required.

XIII. Observations and recommendations

68. The generally calm political and security situation in Sierra Leone has allowed for further progress to be made towards consolidating peace in the country. With the support of UNAMSIL and development partners, the Government of Sierra Leone has advanced towards accomplishing the benchmarks for stabilization in the country and for the withdrawal of the residual UNAMSIL presence. In particular, the Sierra Leone armed forces and police have both continued to build up their capacities to ensure effective responsibility for the security of the country. It has been encouraging to note that there have been no security incidents requiring UNAMSIL support since the Mission handed over primary responsibility for security throughout the country to the Government in September 2004.

69. Furthermore, progress has been made in the consolidation of State authority, since the local provincial and district councils have begun to function and the deployment of the police throughout the country has advanced. Revenues from diamond exports have continued to increase as the Government has increased its control over the diamond-mining sector. In addition, with regard to the benchmarks, UNMIL has now consolidated its deployment throughout Liberia, including in the areas bordering Sierra Leone. This, coupled with the continued deployment of UNAMSIL in the Eastern Province, has contributed to an improvement in security in the border areas of the country. It is the general view that currently Sierra Leone is not facing any significant external security threats.

70. The situation in Sierra Leone remains fragile, however, and much remains to be done to address the underlying causes of the conflict in the country, in order to attain durable stability and long-term national recovery. The strengthening of the security sector needs special, long-term attention. Despite assistance from donors, the Sierra Leone armed forces and police are still experiencing serious equipment shortfalls and full deployment of the police in the provinces has yet to be attained. I would like to appeal once again to donors to consider contributing generously towards the urgently needed assistance for the Sierra Leonean security sector.

71. The local councils also need sustained support to improve their capacity to deliver basic services to the population. The efforts under way to establish a clear distribution of responsibilities between the district councils and the chieftaincy system should also be expedited. In addition, the Government needs to take further steps towards the restoration of the rule of law, including by implementing a comprehensive reform of the penal and judicial systems and building the capacity of an independent and impartial judiciary, accessible to all Sierra Leoneans, which will effectively contribute to peace consolidation and the protection of human rights.

72. Progress made in the area of the protection of human rights, with the assistance of UNAMSIL and other partners, needs to be built on, including through the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission. The Government should be encouraged to follow up on implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which submitted its report in October 2004. Continuous monitoring of the human rights situation and reporting of violations will be a crucial element in consolidating peace in Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, electoral reform issues should be urgently addressed if the 2007 elections are to be free and fair and held in accordance with international standards. At the same time, the work of the Special Court has proceeded satisfactorily. With regard to the judicial process set in motion by the indictments of the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, and the former AFRC leader, Johnny Paul Koroma, and subsequent Court decisions relating to the indictments, the law should be allowed to take its course.

73. The economic recovery in the country in the post-conflict period has been limited, and the living standards of the majority of the population remain poor. Poverty, including massive youth unemployment, and public discontent over slow progress made by the Government in the fight against corruption and the improvement of management of State revenues are issues that urgently need to be addressed in order to sustain stability.

74. The Government should take full advantage of the opportunity that the Consultative Group meeting in June provides to outline a programme of action in key areas such as reform, institutional capacity-building, addressing youth unemployment and combating corruption. I strongly support efforts currently under way to encourage high-level donor participation in this important event. Meanwhile, at this critical point in Sierra Leone's transition, I would also encourage donors to consider providing generous contributions for the implementation of the projects contained in the poverty reduction strategy paper and other vital recovery and development initiatives.

75. The summit of the leaders of the Mano River Union countries held in Koindu in February was a further important step towards strengthening dialogue and cooperation between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The three countries should be encouraged to continue efforts towards developing a collaborative approach in addressing the political, economic and social challenges facing the subregion. Further support by the international community for the revitalization of the Mano River Union secretariat and other structures will be vital to advance such an approach.

76. The territorial issue concerning the border village of Yenga remains a source of tension between Guinea and Sierra Leone. It would be beneficial if the two Governments built on steps taken in recent months regarding the issue and gave priority attention to developing and implementing a plan that would facilitate an early resolution of the matter. I have instructed my Special Representative for Sierra Leone to provide active assistance in that regard.

77. The further stabilization of the situation in Liberia has had a positive impact on the overall situation in the subregion. However, developments in the country before the October elections and during the period leading to the inauguration of the new Government in January 2006 will need to be monitored carefully with regard to any possible spillover effects on Sierra Leone. It is hoped that progress will be made in Côte d'Ivoire towards the full and unconditional implementation of the Pretoria

Agreement of 7 April. Clearly, a continuation of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire or instability in Guinea could have a destabilizing effect on the subregion, including Sierra Leone.

78. Having carefully assessed the situation, I believe that the outstanding challenges in ensuring peace consolidation would be best addressed by the Government with the support of United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as bilateral donors, which are most suited for post-conflict capacity-building. Therefore, an adjustment in the strategy of the United Nations involvement in Sierra Leone is warranted. As indicated in paragraphs 59 to 61 above, I would like to recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate for the UNAMSIL presence in Sierra Leone for a final period of six months, until the end of 2005.

79. The Government should make full use of the unique window of opportunity provided by the continuing presence of UNAMSIL to further consolidate the security sector, in order to ensure effective security throughout the country, supported by the timely provision of the required assistance, and to address other outstanding challenges.

80. In view of the logistical constraints described in paragraph 65 above, I would also recommend that the drawdown of the UNAMSIL presence commence in mid-August 2005 and be essentially completed by 31 December 2005. However, the last infantry battalion and air assets should remain fully operational until the end of November, by which time the results of the elections in Liberia will be known. In order to allow for the timely planning and logistical preparations for an orderly withdrawal of UNAMSIL, an early decision of the Security Council, including on the arrangements described in sections IX, X and XI of this report, would be essential. Furthermore, should a serious threat in the subregional or internal security situation in Sierra Leone arise in the coming months, I will revert to the Council with appropriate recommendations, including the possibility of adjustments in the schedule of the Mission's withdrawal.

81. In conclusion, I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Security Council and troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as to ECOWAS, donor countries, international and local non-governmental organizations and other partners of the United Nations for their continued support for consolidating the peace in Sierra Leone. I also would like to commend my Special Representative, Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, and all UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel for the contribution they continue to make towards ensuring security, stability and national recovery in Sierra Leone.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: military and civilian police strength (as at 5 April 2005)

Countries	*Military component*				*Civilian police component*
	United Nations military observers	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	
Bangladesh	8	8	232	248	2
Bolivia	3			3	
Canada	3			3	
China	3			3	
Croatia	6			6	
Czech Republic	2			2	
Denmark	1			1	
Egypt	6			6	
Gambia	8			8	2
Germany			8	8	
Ghana	3	5	756	764	5
Guinea	5			5	
India					5
Indonesia	6			6	
Jordan	6	3	69	78	2
Kenya	6	6		12	6
Kyrgyzstan	2			2	
Malawi					2
Malaysia	5			5	2
Mali	4			4	
Mauritius					2
Namibia					2
Nepal	5	2		7	5
New Zealand	1			1	
Nigeria	6	5	750	761	4
Norway					3
Pakistan	7	11	1 256	1 274	2
Russian Federation	8	3	110	121	2
Senegal					3
Slovakia	1			1	
Sri Lanka					4
Sweden	1			1	3
United Republic of Tanzania	6			6	
Thailand	3			3	

Countries	Military component				Civilian police component
	United Nations military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	
Turkey					5
United Kingdom	8	5		13	6
Ukraine	3	3		6	
Uruguay	5			5	
Zambia	6	2		8	7
Zimbabwe					6
Total	**137**	**53**	**3 181**	**3 371**	**80**

Map No. 4132 Rev. 30 UNITED NATIONS
April 2005

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section